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Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council adopts resolution on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States; urges all States to pursue negotiations in good faith on disarmament treaty, as provided for by NPT.

+ Secretary-General appoints Carol Bellamy of United States as Executive Director of UNICEF.

+ Security Council decides to maintain UNIKOM, as recommended by Secretary-General; notes Iraqi and Kuwaiti authorities have cooperated with Mission.

+ Secretary-General expresses alarm at deterioration of situation in Tajikistan; appeals to Tajik parties to exercise restraint and to hold next round of talks soon.

+ Overall situation in Liberia has deteriorated, but ECOWAS summit could catalyze peace process, Secretary-General says; UNOMIL mandate should be extended to 30 June.

+ United Nations has improved its ability to respond to conflict situations, Under-Secretary General Annan tells Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations.

+ United Nations relieves Major-General Alexander Perelyakin of command of UNCRO Sector East, citing severe shortcomings in his performance.

+ WFP says Rwandan officials are blocking passage of trucks carrying emergency food aid to refugees in Zaire.

+ Legal Committee of Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space concludes annual session.

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For information media—not an official record

The Security Council today adopted a resolution sponsored by China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. It took that action less than a week before the opening of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Council had before it letters from the five permanent members offering "negative security assurances" to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty. They said they would not use nuclear weapons against such non-nuclear States except in the case of invasion or attack by them, in association or alliance with a nuclear-weapon State on the State making the assurance, its allies or other States towards which it had a security commitment.

In unanimously adopting resolution 984 (1995), the Council noted the security assurances given by the nuclear-weapon States. It recognized the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the NPT to receive assurances that the Council would act immediately in the event that they were the victim of, or threatened with, an act of aggression with nuclear weapons. In such an event, any State might bring the matter immediately to the Council's attention, to enable it to take urgent action to provide assistance to the victim. The means of assistance would include an investigation into the situation and appropriate measures to settle the dispute and restore international peace and security.

The Council invited Member States to take appropriate measures in response to a request from the victim for technical, medical, scientific or humanitarian assistance. It expressed its intention to recommend appropriate procedures regarding compensation under international law from the aggressor for loss, damage or injury sustained as a result of the aggression.

The Council urged all States, as provided for in the NPT, to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament. It reaffirmed the inherent right, recognized in the United Nations Charter, of individual and collective self-defence if an armed attack occurred against a Member State, until the Council had taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has appointed Carol Bellamy as Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Prior to taking that action, he interviewed eight candidates submitted by Belgium, Finland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Ms. Bellamy has been Director of the United States Peace Corps since 1993, and served as President of the New York City Council from 1978 to 1985. She will be replacing James Grant, who died on 28 January, as Executive Director of UNICEF.

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The Security Council has decided to maintain the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM), as recommended by the Secretary-General. In a report dated 31 March, he said the Mission contributed significantly to the reduction of tension and the preservation of calm in its area of operations. In a letter to the Secretary-General dated 10 April, the President of the Council said the question of UNIKOM's termination or continuation, and its modalities of operation, would be reviewed once again by 7 October.

The Council noted the Secretary-General's statement that UNIKOM had enjoyed the effective cooperation of the Iraqi and Kuwaiti authorities in the performance of its functions. It stressed that Iraq and Kuwait should do everything necessary to facilitate the Mission's freedom of movement. It expressed the hope that both countries would heed UNIKOM's regulations and suggestions designed to reduce the risk of incidents along the border.

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The Secretary-General has expressed alarm at reports from his Special Envoy and the United Nations Mission of Observers for Tajikistan (UNMOT) about the serious deterioration of the situation in Tajikistan. He noted an escalation of violence in recent days, which had resulted in an unfortunate loss of life. He warned that the current extension of the cease-fire agreement and political dialogue between the parties could be derailed.

The Secretary-General appealed to the Tajik parties and other countries concerned to exercise restraint and to do their utmost to continue the political dialogue and to hold the next round of talks as soon as possible.

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The peace process in Liberia remains at an impasse, while the overall situation in the country has deteriorated, according to the Secretary-General. However, in a report dated 10 April, he said the proposed summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) could catalyze the peace process, leading to the installation of a Council of State. He thus recommended that the Security Council extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) until 30 June.

The Secretary-General went on to say that the present security situation in Liberia prevented UNOMIL from carrying out part of its mandate, and that he would reduce its military strength by some 20 observers. The military component would be strengthened as necessary when the situation improved. He expressed the hope that ECOWAS would have sufficient time to prepare for and convene its summit, and that the parties would finally decide to cooperate with international efforts to restore peace in Liberia. He urged them to install the Council of State, reestablish an effective cease-fire, and take

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concrete steps to implement the 1994 Accra Agreement. The future role of the United Nations in Liberia would depend on the political will they demonstrated in advancing the peace process.

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The United Nations has improved its ability to respond to conflict situations, according to the Under-Secretary General for Peace-keeping Operations, Kofi Annan. Addressing the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations as it began its 1995 session yesterday, he said that a sound structure had been developed in the Department for Peace-keeping Operations. However, given the enormous complexity, size and number of operations in the field, staffing was still thin by any standard.

In his opening statement, Committee Chairman Ibrahim Gambari cited the far-reaching recommendations made last year by the Committee in such areas as evaluation of operations, command and control, finances and public information. In the current session, the Committee should be able to focus on a few key issues in order to provide the best guidance possible.

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The United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO) Sector Commander in Sector East, Major-General Alexander Perelyakin of the Russian Federation, has been relieved of his command, according to a United Nations spokesman in the former Yugoslavia. He said the decision to relieve General Perelyakin had been taken at Headquarters, in view of "severe shortcomings" in his performance.

The spokesman said Force Commander Bernard Janvier, former Force Commander General Bertrand de Lapresle, and Special Representative Yasushi Akashi were dissatisfied with "the repeated inabilities of General Perelyakin to exhibit acceptable standards of leadership". The General had failed to perform his duties in accordance with the Force Commander's directives, and had failed to improve on his shortcomings when they were brought to his attention. His repatriation has been requested for no later than today.

In a separate development, a Polish UNCRO peace-keeper was found dead of a gunshot wound in Sector North yesterday. He was on duty at the time of his death. An investigation has been launched into the incident.

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Rwandan officials have been blocking the passage of trucks carrying emergency food aid to refugees in Zaire, according to the World Food Programme (WFP). Twenty-nine trucks destined for refugee camps in Bukavu have been blocked at Cyangugu in Rwanda, near the Zairean border, for nearly a week. Another 24 trucks are stuck in Kigali awaiting the opening of the border. The trucks are carrying a total of 2,000 tons of urgently needed food.

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The closure of the Cyangugu crossing point has effectively stopped the flow of aid to refugees in Zaire through Rwanda. Since the beginning of the year, Rwandan authorities have made it increasingly difficult for WFP to transport food through Gisenyi to Goma in Zaire, where 750,000 Rwandan refugees are sheltered. Rwandan officials have subjected WFP convoys to arduous searches and security checks, effectively slowing the flow of aid to a trickle.

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The Legal Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space has approved a questionnaire on the legal norms to be applied to aerospace objects. It took that action as it concluded its annual session in Vienna on Friday.

The questionnaire for Committee members comprises nine questions dealing with the definition of aerospace objects -- objects such as space shuttles, as distinct from objects that are simply launched into outer space. They also deal with the legal aspects of the transit of aerospace objects from outer space into airspace and their overflight of foreign States. The questionnaire is included in an annex to the Subcommittee's sessional report.

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